

Dear Co-Chair Kennedy, Co-Chair Miner, Co-Chair Demicco, Vice Chair Flexer, Vice Chair Gresko, Vice Chair Somers, Ranking Member Harding, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

I am a wildlife rehabilitator volunteer and transporter who cares greatly about wildlife. Please accept my public hearing testimony for the following 4 bills, along with a request to bring up HB 5615 (which would allow towns to ban trapping):

1) OPPOSE SB 522 -- would allow bear hunting, which I strongly oppose. One of the original residents of Connecticut, the Black Bear is the smallest and most timid of all the bears. An omnivore seeking solitude and a unique part of the natural balance, they self-regulate their own population based on food supply. Hunting has a very negative effect on this very basic and natural measurement of population. This not only degrades the success rate and gene pool (hunting doesn't kill the weakest member; no association with "survival of the fittest"), but it creates desperation and the death of orphaned cubs. Learning how to remove attractants (e.g., accessible garbage, pet food left outside) and, if necessary, how to haze and exclusion strategies, are the humane, simple, effective, and science-based solutions to conflicts with wildlife. An outrageous claim being made by proponents is that population size will double every few years, but this is not true: bears are a very slow-to-reproduce species, and in addition, have many natural checks to their population size, including the phenomenon of delayed implantation. Slow reproduction rates make bear populations susceptible to overhunting.

2) OPPOSE HB 5499 -- would expand Sunday hunting to allow use of shotguns, rifles, and muzzleloaders. I want a day to enjoy the woods in peace for myself, my children and wildlife. This bill does nothing to reduce the incidence of Lyme disease, lead poisoning to endangered birds of prey (among others), and will not reduce the deer population in any sustainable way, as the population will bounce back.

3) SUPPORT HB 6335 -- ivory sales ban, which I strongly support, will clamp down on illegal ivory and rhino horn sales by prohibiting the sale of ivory and rhino horn within Connecticut. The illegal trade is horrifically cruel, on a scale that threatens extinction, is a known funding source for major terrorist organizations, and over a thousand park rangers have been killed by poachers while on duty. NY and NJ have passed laws, and CT needs to join them, else we will become a haven for illicit ivory. Last year's bill included a [report from the Office of Fiscal Analysis](#) that anticipated 4-8 prosecutions per year if the bill became law...a tacit acknowledgment of ongoing illegal trafficking in our state. State bans are needed because ivory traffickers exploit federal loopholes. Despite federal regulations restricting interstate sale, import, and export of wildlife products, certain ivory and rhino horns, including antiques and pre-CITES items, can be sold under the Endangered Species Act. Criminals capitalize on these loopholes by aging newly harvested ivory so that it appears old or using fraudulent documentation. Thus, legal trade serves as a cover for illegal ivory trade. This bill would NOT criminalize possession of ivory currently owned by Connecticut residents or prohibit inheritance or noncommercial gifts, nor would it restrict the sale or purchase by a museum, nor would it restrict the sale or purchase of bona-fide antiques and musical instruments that meet certain requirements.

4) SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS, SB 942 -- Cecil's law, anti -trophy hunting.

I support anti- trophy hunting measures. Hunters often kill the largest and the strongest animals, usually males with the most impressive manes, tusks, horns, etc. These animals are endowed with the best genes for survival and once killed, their strong genes are lost to future generations. Further, the social biology of some species means that killing the strongest male will result in scores of additional deaths. For example, when a dominant African lion is killed, he leaves females and cubs vulnerable to a hostile pride takeover from another male, in which case the new male will kill the cubs of the previous lion. Trophy hunting is not conservation. Forty-five airlines have stopped transporting some or all types of hunting trophies, especially that of the Africa Big Five. I also support the HSUS amendments which ensure that federal law doesn't pre-empt CT's efforts, and which add the African buffalo to the list of protected species.

5) I ask that you bring up HB 5615 for a public hearing. HB 5615 would give local control to allow municipalities to determine whether or not they want to ban trapping. Trapping is cruel and indiscriminate (dogs, cats, and birds are often caught in these traps), and not effective in curbing undesired wildlife behavior. Further, trapping does not control the population size of wild animals due to the high compensatory reproduction ability exhibited by most fur-bearing species. It is far more effective to educate the public about long lasting strategies that work and tackle the source of the problem: ie how to remove food and den site attractants, use exclusion strategies, and modify behavior by negative conditioning / hazing of problem animals. I want my town to be able to make its own decisions about whether or not to allow trapping within its borders. Our neighbors in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Jersey are among other states which have banned or severely restricted the use of leghold and

body-crushing traps, and I want to see Connecticut take this important step in sparing people and wildlife from the grotesque impact of this trap.

Thank you for your help and consideration,

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